FILED IN THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON Vanessa R. Waldref 1 United States Attorney MAR 28 2023 Eastern District of Washington 3 Michael D. Murphy SEAN F. MCAVOY, CLERK Assistant United States Attorney YAKIMA, WASHINGTON 402 E. Yakima Avenue, Suite 210 Yakima, WA 98901 5 Telephone: (509) 454-4425 6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 7 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON 8 Case No.: 1:22-CR-2063-MKD 9 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 10 Plea Agreement Plaintiff, 11(c)(1)(C)11 V. 12 13 BRANDON KELLY ROOT, 14 Defendant. 15 16 Plaintiff United States of America, by and through Vanessa R. Waldref, 17 United States Attorney the Eastern District of Washington, and Michael D. 18 Murphy, Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington, 19 and Defendant Brandon Kelly Root ("Defendant"), both individually and by and 20 through Defendant's counsel, Alex B. Hernandez, III, agree to the following Plea 21 Agreement. 22 Guilty Plea and Maximum Statutory Penalties 1. 23 Defendant agrees to enter a plea of guilty to Counts 3-6 of the Indictment 24 filed on June 7, 2022. The indictment charges Defendant with Counts 3 and 4 25 Involuntary Manslaughter, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1153 and 1112, Class C 26 felonies: 27 Defendant understands that the following potential penalties apply to those

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counts:

PLEA AGREEMENT - 1

- a term of imprisonment of not more than 8 years:
- a term of supervised release of not more than 3 years;
- a fine of up to \$250,000;
- a \$100 special penalty assessment.

The Indictment also charges Defendant with Counts 5 and 6, Assault Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1153 and

Defendant understands that the following potential penalties apply to those

- a term of imprisonment of not more than 10 years;
- a term of supervised release of not more than 3 years;
- a fine of up to \$250,000;
- restitution; and
- a \$100 special penalty assessment.

Defendant understands that if Defendant violates any condition of Defendant's supervised release, the Court may revoke Defendant's term of supervised release, and require Defendant to serve in prison all or part of the term of supervised release authorized by statute for the offense that resulted in such term of supervised release without credit for time previously served on postrelease supervision, up to the following terms:

- 5 years in prison if the offense that resulted in the term of Supervised Release is a class A felony,
- 3 years in prison if the offense that resulted in the term of Supervised Release is a class B felony, and/or

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2 years in prison if the offense that resulted in the term of
 Supervised Release is a class C felony.

Accordingly, Defendant understands that if Defendant commits one or more violations of supervised release, Defendant could serve a total term of incarceration greater than the maximum sentence authorized by statute for Defendant's offense or offenses of conviction.

3. Rule 11 Nature of the Plea Agreement

Defendant acknowledges that this Plea Agreement is entered pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(C) ("Rule 11(c)(1)(C)"). Pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(C), the United States and Defendant agree that the appropriate disposition of the case is 96 months (8 years) in custody, to be followed by 3 years of Supervised Release. The United States and Defendant agree to make those sentencing recommendations to the Court. Although the United States and Defendant agree to make these recommendations to the Court pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(C), Defendant acknowledges that no promises of any type have been made to Defendant with respect to the sentence the Court will ultimately impose. Defendant understands that Defendant may withdraw from this Plea Agreement if the Court imposes a term of imprisonment of greater than 96 months (8 years) or indicates its intent to do so. Defendant also understands that the United States may withdraw from this Plea Agreement if the Court imposes a term of imprisonment of less than 96 months (8 years) or a term of supervised release of less than 3 years, or indicates its intent to do so.

The United States and Defendant acknowledge that the imposition of any fine, restitution, or conditions of Supervised Release are not part of the Rule 11(c)(1)(C) nature of this Plea Agreement; that the United States and Defendant are free to make any recommendations they deem appropriate as to the imposition of fines, restitution, or conditions of Supervised Release; and that the Court will exercise its discretion in this regard. The United States and Defendant

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acknowledge that the Court's decisions regarding the imposition of fines, restitution, or conditions of Supervised Release will not provide bases for Defendant to withdraw Defendant's guilty plea or withdraw from this Rule 11(c)(1)(C) Plea Agreement.

Defendant acknowledges that if either the United States or Defendant successfully withdraws from this Plea Agreement, the Plea Agreement becomes a nullity, and the United States is no longer bound by any representations within it.

4. <u>Potential Immigration Consequences of Guilty Plea</u>

If Defendant is not a citizen of the United States, Defendant understands the following:

- a. pleading guilty in this case may have immigration consequences;
- a broad range of federal crimes may result in Defendant's removal from the United States, including the offense to which Defendant is pleading guilty;
- c. removal from the United States and other immigration consequences are the subject of separate proceedings; and
- d. no one, including Defendant's attorney or the Court, can predict
 with absolute certainty the effect of a federal conviction on
 Defendant's immigration status.

Defendant affirms that Defendant is knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily pleading guilty as set forth in this Plea Agreement, regardless of any immigration consequences that Defendant's guilty plea may entail.

5. Waiver of Constitutional Rights

Defendant understands that by entering this guilty plea, Defendant is knowingly and voluntarily waiving certain constitutional rights, including the following:

a. the right to a jury trial;

- b. the right to see, hear and question the witnesses;
- c. the right to remain silent at trial;
- d. the right to testify at trial; and
- e. the right to compel witnesses to testify.

While Defendant is waiving certain constitutional rights, Defendant understands that Defendant retains the right to be assisted by an attorney through the sentencing proceedings in this case and any direct appeal of Defendant's conviction and sentence, and that an attorney will be appointed at no cost if Defendant cannot afford to hire an attorney.

Defendant understands and agrees that any defense motions currently pending before the Court are mooted by this Plea Agreement, and Defendant expressly waives Defendant's right to bring any additional pretrial motions.

6. <u>Elements of the Offense</u>

The United States and Defendant agree that in order to convict Defendant of Involuntary Manslaughter, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1153 and 1112 and as charged in Counts 3 and 4, the United States would have to prove the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

- a. First, Defendant committed an act that might produce death;
- b. Second, Defendant acted with gross negligence, defined as wanton or reckless disregard for human life;
- c. Third, Defendant's act was the proximate cause of the death of the victim. A proximate cause is one that played a substantial part in bringing about the death, so that the death was a direct result or a reasonably probable consequence of the act;
- d. Fourth, the killing was unlawful;
- e. Fifth, Defendant either knew that such an act was a threat to the lives of others or knew of circumstances that would reasonably

cause him to foresee that such an act might be a threat to the lives of others;

- f. Sixth, the killing occurred in Indian Country; and
- g. Seventh, Defendant is an Indian.

The United States and Defendant agree that in order to convict Defendant of Assault Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1153 and 113(a)(6) and as charged in Counts 5 and 6, the United States would have to prove the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

- a. First, the Defendant assaulted the victims by driving a vehicle while under the influence of or affected by intoxicating liquor and by driving a vehicle in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property;
- b. Second, as a result of the assault, the victims suffered serious bodily injury;
- c. Third, the assault occurred in Indian Country; and
- d. Fourth, the Defendant is an Indian.

7. Factual Basis and Statement of Facts

The United States and Defendant stipulate and agree to the following: the facts set forth below are accurate; the United States could prove these facts beyond a reasonable doubt at trial; and these facts constitute an adequate factual basis for Defendant's guilty plea.

The United States and Defendant agree that this statement of facts does not preclude either party from presenting and arguing, for sentencing purposes, additional facts that are relevant to the Sentencing Guidelines computation or sentencing, unless otherwise prohibited in this Plea Agreement.

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On June 11, 2017 at approximately 2:30 a.m. the Defendant, Brandon Kelly Root, was driving in a vehicle on a public roadway within the exterior bounds of the Yakama Nation in the Eastern District of Washington while affected by alcohol when he crossed the center line of the roadway and his vehicle struck another vehicle head on. In the other vehicle were located M.G., J.C., J.A. and Minor 1. As a result of the wreck, M.G. and J.C. were killed. J.A. and Minor 1 each suffered serious bodily injuries. J.A.'s leg was broken as a result of the collision, requiring medical treatment and causing prolonged and severe pain and disability and Minor 1 suffered serious injuries to his head and face which required hospitalization and medical treatment and which caused prolonged and severe pain and disability. When officers arrived at the scene of the collision, they found the Defendant, Brandon Kelly Root, wedged in the driver's seat of the vehicle. Officers noted that he had blood shot, watery eyes, slurred speech, and an odor of intoxicants about his person. Defendant was the only occupant of his vehicle and an 18-pack of beer was located on the front passenger floorboard. A blood draw conducted at the hospital about four hours after the collision showed Defendant's blood alcohol level as .10 at that time. In an interview with law enforcement, Defendant admitted to drinking that day at a softball tournament and a bar. He did not recall the details of the crash. Defendant has prior convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol and on June 11, 2017 he knew that his action in driving while intoxicated could lead to the death or injury of himself or other people but disregarded that risk. Brandon Kelly Root is an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation and by that reason as well as by blood is considered an "Indian" under federal law. The land within the exterior bounds of the Yakama Nation is "Indian Country" under federal law.

8. The United States' Agreements

The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington agrees that at the time of sentencing, the United States will move to dismiss Counts

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1 and 2 of the Indictment filed June 7, 2022, which charge Defendant with Second Degree Murder in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1153, 1111.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington agrees not to bring additional charges against Defendant based on information in its possession at the time of this Plea Agreement that arise from conduct that is either charged in the Indictment or identified in discovery produced in this case, unless Defendant breaches this Plea Agreement before sentencing.

United States Sentencing Guidelines Calculations 9.

Defendant understands and acknowledges that the United States Sentencing Guidelines ("U.S.S.G." or "Guidelines") apply and that the Court will determine Defendant's advisory range at the time of sentencing, pursuant to the Guidelines. The United States and Defendant agree to the following Guidelines calculations.

Acceptance of Responsibility a.

The United States will recommend that Defendant receive a three-level downward adjustment for acceptance of responsibility, pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(a), (b), if Defendant does the following:

- i. accepts this Plea Agreement;
- ii. enters a guilty plea at the first Court hearing that takes place after the United States offers this Plea Agreement;
- iii. demonstrates recognition and affirmative acceptance of Defendant's personal responsibility for Defendant's criminal conduct;
- provides complete and accurate information during the iv. sentencing process; and
- does not commit any obstructive conduct. v.

The United States and Defendant agree that at its option and on written notice to Defendant, the United States may elect not to recommend a reduction for acceptance of responsibility if, prior to the imposition of sentence, Defendant is charged with, or convicted of, any criminal offense, or if Defendant tests positive for any controlled substance.

b. No Other Agreements

The United States and Defendant have no other agreements regarding the Guidelines or the application of any Guidelines enhancements, departures, or variances. Defendant understands and acknowledges that the United States is free to make any sentencing arguments it sees fit, including arguments arising from Defendant's uncharged conduct, conduct set forth in charges that will be dismissed pursuant to this Agreement, and Defendant's relevant conduct.

c. Criminal History

The United States and Defendant have no agreement and make no representations about Defendant's criminal history category, which will be determined by the Court after the United States Probation Office prepares and discloses a Presentence Investigative Report.

10. Incarceration

The United States and Defendant agree to recommend a sentence of eight years (96 months) incarceration.

11. Supervised Release

The United States and Defendant each agree to recommend 3 years of supervised release. Defendant agrees that the Court's decision regarding the conditions of Defendant's Supervised Release is final and non-appealable; that is, even if Defendant is unhappy with the conditions of Supervised Release ordered by the Court, that will not be a basis for Defendant to withdraw Defendant's guilty plea, withdraw from this Plea Agreement, or appeal Defendant's conviction, sentence, or any term of Supervised Release.

The United States and Defendant agree to recommend that in addition to the standard conditions of supervised release imposed in all cases in this District, the Court should also impose the following conditions:

- a. The United States Probation Officer may conduct, upon reasonable suspicion, and with or without notice, a search of Defendant's person, residences, offices, vehicles, belongings, and areas under Defendant's exclusive or joint control.
- b. Defendant shall participate and complete such drug testing and drug treatment programs as the Probation Officer directs.
- c. Defendant shall complete mental health evaluations and treatment, including taking medications prescribed by the treatment provider if ordered by the Court. Defendant shall allow reciprocal release of information between the Probation Officer and the treatment provider. Defendant shall contribute to the cost of treatment according to the Defendant's ability.

12. Criminal Fine

The United States and Defendant may make any recommendation concerning the imposition of a criminal fine. Defendant acknowledges that the Court's decision regarding a fine is final and non-appealable; that is, even if Defendant is unhappy with a fine ordered by the Court, that will not be a basis for Defendant to withdraw Defendant's guilty plea, withdraw from this Plea Agreement, or appeal Defendant's conviction, sentence, or fine.

13. Mandatory Special Penalty Assessment

Defendant agrees to pay the \$400 mandatory special penalty assessment to the Clerk of Court for the Eastern District of Washington, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3013.

14. Restitution

The United States and Defendant agree that restitution is appropriate and mandatory, without regard to Defendant's economic situation, to identifiable victims who have suffered physical injury or pecuniary loss, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 3663A, 3664.

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3663(a)(3), Defendant voluntarily agrees to pay restitution for all losses caused by Defendant's individual conduct, in exchange for the United States not bringing additional potential charges, regardless of whether counts associated with such losses will be dismissed as part of this Plea Agreement. With respect to restitution, the United States and Defendant agree to the following:

a. Restitution Amount and Interest

The United States and Defendant stipulate and agree that, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 3663, 3663A and 3664, the Court should order restitution in an amount of no greater than \$20,000, and that any interest on this restitution amount, if any, should be waived.

b. Payments

To the extent restitution is ordered, the United States and Defendant agree that the Court will set a restitution payment schedule based on Defendant's financial circumstances. 18 U.S.C. § 3664(f)(2), (3)(A). Regardless, Defendant agrees to pay not less than 10% of Defendant's net monthly income towards restitution.

c. <u>Treasury Offset Program and Collection</u>

Defendant understands the Treasury Offset Program ("TOP") collects delinquent debts owed to federal agencies. If applicable, the TOP may take part or all of Defendant's federal tax refund, federal retirement benefits, or other federal benefits and apply these monies to Defendant's restitution obligations. 26 U.S.C. § 6402(d); 31 U.S.C. § 3720A; 31 U.S.C. § 3716.

Defendant understands that the United States may, notwithstanding the

Court-imposed payment schedule, pursue other avenues to ensure the restitution obligation is satisfied, including, but not limited to, garnishment of available funds, wages, or assets. 18 U.S.C. §§ 3572, 3613, and 3664(m).

Nothing in this acknowledgment shall be construed to limit Defendant's ability to assert any specifically identified exemptions as provided by law, except as set forth in this Plea Agreement.

Until Defendant's fine and restitution obligations are paid in full, Defendant agrees fully to disclose all assets in which Defendant has any interest or over which Defendant exercises control, directly or indirectly, including those held by a spouse, nominee or third party.

Until Defendant's fine and restitution obligations are paid in full, Defendant agrees to provide waivers, consents, or releases requested by the U.S. Attorney's Office to access records to verify the financial information.

d. Notifications and Waivers

Defendant agrees to notify the Court and the United States of any material change in Defendant's economic circumstances (e.g., inheritances, monetary gifts, changed employment, or income increases) that might affect Defendant's ability to pay restitution. 18 U.S.C. § 3664(k). Defendant also agrees to notify the United States of any address change within 30 days of that change. 18 U.S.C. § 3612(b)(1)(F). These obligations cease when Defendant's fine and restitution obligations are paid in full.

Defendant acknowledges that the Court's decision regarding restitution is final and non-appealable; that is, even if Defendant is unhappy with the amount of restitution ordered by the Court, that will not be a basis for Defendant to withdraw Defendant's guilty plea, withdraw from this Plea Agreement, or appeal Defendant's conviction, sentence, or restitution order.

15. Payments While Incarcerated

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If Defendant lacks the financial resources to pay the monetary obligations imposed by the Court, Defendant agrees to earn money toward these obligations by participating in the Bureau of Prisons' Inmate Financial Responsibility Program.

16. Additional Violations of Law Can Void Plea Agreement

The United States and Defendant agree that the United States may, at its option and upon written notice to the Defendant, withdraw from this Plea Agreement or modify its sentencing recommendation if, prior to the imposition of sentence, Defendant is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense or tests positive for any controlled substance.

17. Waiver of Appeal Rights

In return for the concessions that the United States has made in this Plea Agreement, Defendant agrees to waive Defendant's right to appeal Defendant's conviction and sentence if the Court imposes a term of imprisonment consistent with the terms of this Rule 11(c)(1)(C) Plea Agreement.

If the Court indicates its intent to impose a sentence above the Rule 11(c)(1)(C) terms of this Agreement and Defendant chooses not to withdraw, then Defendant: (a) may appeal only Defendant's sentence, but not Defendant's conviction; (b) may appeal Defendant's sentence only if it exceeds the high end of the Guidelines range determined by the Court; and (c) may appeal only the substantive reasonableness of Defendant's sentence. Defendant expressly waives Defendant's right to appeal any fine, or term of supervised release. Defendant expressly waives Defendant's right to appeal any restitution order so long as restitution does not exceed \$20,000.

Defendant expressly waives the right to file any post-conviction motion attacking Defendant's conviction and sentence, including a motion pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2255, except one based on ineffective assistance of counsel arising from information not now known by Defendant and which, in the exercise of due diligence, Defendant could not know by the time the Court imposes sentence.

Nothing in this Plea Agreement shall preclude the United States from opposing any post-conviction motion for a reduction of sentence or other attack upon the conviction or sentence, including, but not limited to, writ of habeas corpus proceedings brought pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2255.

18. Compassionate Release

In consideration for the benefits Defendant is receiving under the terms of this Plea Agreement, Defendant expressly waives Defendant's right to bring any motion for Compassionate Release other than a motion arising from one of the specific bases set forth in this paragraph of this Plea Agreement. The United States retains the right to oppose, on any basis, any motion Defendant files for Compassionate Release.

The only bases on which Defendant may file a motion for Compassionate Release in the Eastern District of Washington are the following:

a. Medical Condition of Defendant

- i. Defendant is suffering from a terminal illness (i.e., a serious and advanced illness with an end of life trajectory). A specific prognosis of life expectancy (i.e., a probability of death within a specific time period) is not required. Examples include metastatic solid-tumor cancer, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), end-stage organ disease, and advanced dementia; or
- ii. Defendant is suffering from a serious physical or medical condition, a serious functional or cognitive impairment, or deteriorating physical or mental health because of the aging process that substantially diminishes the ability of the defendant to provide self-care within the environment

1 of a correctional facility and from which Defendant is not 2 expected to recover. 3 b. Age of Defendant 4 i. Defendant is at least 65 years old, is experiencing a 5 serious deterioration in physical or mental health because 6 of the aging process; and has served at least 10 years or 7 75 percent of Defendant's term of imprisonment, 8 whichever is less; or 9 ii. Defendant is at least 70 years old and has served at least 10 30 years in prison pursuant to a sentence imposed under 11 18 U.S.C. § 3559(c) for the offense or offenses for which Defendant is imprisoned. 12 13 Family Circumstances C. i. 14 The caregiver of Defendant's minor child or children has 15 died or become incapacitated, and Defendant is the only available caregiver for Defendant's minor child or 16 17 children; or 18 ii. Defendant's spouse or registered partner has become 19 incapacitated, and Defendant is the only available 20 caregiver for Defendant's spouse or registered partner. 21 d. Subsequent Reduction to Mandatory Sentence 22 i. Defendant pleaded guilty to an offense which, on the date of Defendant's guilty plea, carried a mandatory minimum 23 24 sentence; and 25 ii. after the entry of judgment, the length of the mandatory 26 minimum sentence for Defendant's offense of conviction 27 was reduced by a change in the law; and 28

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iii. the application of the reduced mandatory minimum sentence would result in Defendant receiving a lower overall sentence.

e. Ineffective Assistance of Counsel

- Defendant seeks Compassionate Release based on a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel arising from information that Defendant both
 - did not know at the time of Defendant's guilty plea, and
 - could not have known, in the exercise of due diligence, at the time the Court imposed sentence.

19. Withdrawal or Vacatur of Defendant's Plea

Should Defendant successfully move to withdraw from this Plea Agreement or should Defendant's conviction be set aside, vacated, reversed, or dismissed under any circumstance, then:

- a. this Plea Agreement shall become null and void;
- b. the United States may prosecute Defendant on all available charges;
- c. The United States may reinstate any counts that have been dismissed, have been superseded by the filing of another charging instrument, or were not charged because of this Plea Agreement; and
- d. the United States may file any new charges that would otherwise be barred by this Plea Agreement.

The decision to pursue any or all of these options is solely in the discretion of the United States Attorney's Office.

Defendant agrees to waive any objections, motions, and defenses Defendant might have to the United States' decision about how to proceed, including a claim that the United States has violated Double Jeopardy.

Defendant agrees not to raise any objections based on the passage of time, including but not limited to, alleged violations of any statutes of limitation or any objections based on the Speedy Trial Act or the Speedy Trial Clause of the Sixth Amendment.

20. Integration Clause

The United States and Defendant acknowledge that this document constitutes the entire Plea Agreement between the United States and Defendant, and no other promises, agreements, or conditions exist between the United States and Defendant concerning the resolution of the case.

This Plea Agreement is binding only on the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington, and cannot bind other federal, state, or local authorities.

The United States and Defendant agree that this Agreement cannot be modified except in a writing that is signed by the United States and Defendant.

Approvals and Signatures

Agreed and submitted on behalf of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington.

21	Vanessa R. Waldref
22	United States Attorney

Michael D. Murphy

Assistant United States Attorney

3/28/2023

Date

I have read this Plea Agreement and I have carefully reviewed and discussed

Plea Agreement. I enter into this Plea Agreement knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily. I have consulted with my attorney about my rights, I understand those rights, and I am satisfied with the representation of my attorney in this case. No other promises or inducements have been made to me, other than those contained in this Plea Agreement. No one has threatened or forced me in any way to enter into this Plea Agreement. I agree to plead guilty because I am guilty.

every part of this Plea Agreement with my attorney. I understand the terms of this

Brandon Kelly Root

Alex B. Hernandez III Attorney for Defendant

Defendant

Date

3-27-23 Date

I have read the Plea Agreement and have discussed the contents of the agreement with my client. The Plea Agreement accurately and completely sets forth the entirety of the agreement between the parties. I concur in my client's decision to plead guilty as set forth in the Plea Agreement. There is no legal reason why the Court should not accept Defendant's guilty plea.

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